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THE METIS IN MANITOBA

Study by
MANITOBA BRANCH
Canadian Association of Social Workers
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This descriptive material and comment contained in the appendix represents, of course, the opinion of the individual social workers, and not necessarily that of the social agencies.

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A. FELD, President, Manitoba Branch C.A.S.W.,
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THE METIS IN MANITOBA

INTRODUCTION

The desire to make a special study of problems of the Metis in our province arose largely from special difficulties experienced by social workers in our group in attempting to help Metis individuals and families. We have had a strong feeling of the futility of trying to work with Metis families on an individual basis without taking into consideration cultural and wider community factors, and all of us felt that these factors had been insufficiently explored and understood, an impression which was borne out when we attempted to collect information in this field.

The decision of the Manitoba Branch of the C.A.S.W. to make this special study came in discussion of the brief on Indian Affairs issued in 1947 by the National C.A.S.W. together with the Canadian Welfare Council. Members of our branch concurred warmly in the findings of the brief, particularly as regards the need for improved health, educational and social services to the Indians. We discussed at that time the fact that the social disadvantages commented upon in relation to the Indian were shared in large part by the Metis. In regard to the Indian, however, there was at least the recognition and acceptance of special responsibility for these people by a particular government body—the Department of Indian Affairs of the Dominion Government. To date, in our own province at least, there had been no formal recognition of responsibility to supply or adapt services to suit the needs and conditions of the Metis.

The term Metis, which is used throughout the study, is defined in the Oxford dictionary as "The offspring of a White and an American Indian, especially in Canada." Thus it refers to various racial mixtures, not only that of French and Indian, as sometimes understood. It is used in preference to the more commonly used term "half breed" because of the disparaging connotations of the latter term, which we feel expresses an attitude which is central to much of the difficulties experienced, and which was certainly not the one in which we wished to make our study. It was recognized from the start that the Metis group is not clearly defined. From a standpoint of racial inheritance it includes many who have become assimilated into the white community, who have accepted the standards of the white community and who do not think of themselves, nor do others think of them, as being of mixed racial inheritance. Others follow much more closely the economic and cultural pattern of the Indian. The distinction between the Indian and the Metis of this latter group is legal and social, rather than racial. Inter-marriage has been so common that the modern Indian too is of mixed racial inheritance. The operations of the legal and social factors rather than the racial ones are seen clearly in the fact that the child of the marriage of a Treaty Indian woman and a white man is considered a Metis child, while a child of a Treaty Indian man and his white wife is Treaty Indian. *It was accepted that for the purposes of this study we would concern ourselves particularly with the group who are commonly identified in the community as being Metis.*

WHERE ARE THE METIS?

In searching for information concerning the numbers and residence distribution of Metis, we referred to the 1941 census figures.

	No. of Metis	Total Population
Saskatchewan	9,160	895,992
Alberta	8,808	796,169
Manitoba	8,692	729,744
Ontario	4,069	3,787,655
British Columbia	2,117	817,861
Quebec	1,545	3,331,882

A breakdown of these figures by electoral districts raised serious questions as to their accuracy. Workers from certain Manitoba areas could themselves name more Metis than the census showed for that area. It was commented, in explanation, that many people with recognizable Indian inheritance do not call themselves Metis but may state for instance that they are French Canadian or Scotch. In such instances there may be variation in the method of classification used by the enumerators, and in some of the less accessible areas the returns may not be complete. We were convinced, therefore, that the census figures definitely understated the number of Metis in the population. Assuming that this understatement applies fairly uniformly, however, we were struck by the indication that Manitoba is the province having the highest proportion of Metis in relation to total population; though closely followed by Saskatchewan and Alberta. We noted also that by far the greatest number of Metis both in Manitoba and throughout Canada, live in rural areas, but also that Greater Winnipeg shows the largest Metis concentration of any urban area of Canada, the number listed being 620.

In Manitoba, Metis settlements are found for the most part as follows:

1. On the fringes of the settled areas and mostly on sub-marginal land which is not suitable for farming, for example, the Brokenhead district east of Richer, Marchand, St. Lazare, and some communities in the Inter-Lake area.

2. Since fishing is one of the means of livelihood frequently adopted, groups have also settled along the shores of Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis, such as at Selkirk, St. Laurent, Camperville and Duck Bay, and also near some of the smaller lakes and rivers.

3. Groups have often settled near the boundary of the Indian Reserves, such as the community in the Pine Falls area not far from the Fort Alexander Reserve. Some of the people in these communities are Indians who have been brought up on the Reserves but have relinquished their treaty rights or lost them by marriage and wish to remain in the district they know, near their friends, relatives and employment.

4. Small groups are scattered over the northern portion of the province, which, no doubt, contains the largest number of Metis in proportion to the population, since it is there that their chief means of subsistence—hunting, trapping, and fishing—are most readily available. Some of these groups are in fairly permanent settlements; others are nomadic.

5. Those who have settled in urban areas are usually to be found in sub-standard houses on the outskirts of the cities or towns (such as the Metis community in Fort Rouge, Winnipeg).

WHAT ARE THE MAIN PROBLEMS?

Because the Metis are not a clearly defined ethnic group, concerning whom accurate statistics can be collected, it is impossible for this report to establish scientifically what was nevertheless unanimously accepted as true by those making the study—namely that the Metis are, in the main, an economically and socially disadvantaged group. It has been established in numerous surveys, however, that both infant mortality and the death rate from tuberculosis are startlingly higher among the Indian than among the white population of Canada, and common observation confirms that in this the Metis shares the position of the Indian. Similarly we believe it to be accepted by all familiar with conditions among the Metis that poverty, dependency, illiteracy, illegitimacy and similar social problems have a higher incidence among them than among the white population. Some eye-witness descriptions of these conditions are attached as appendices to this report.

It is, of course, far from easy to identify and assess the various factors involved in such a situation. We recognize the ways that poverty and illiteracy tend to perpetuate themselves. We note the relationship between "shiftlessness" and malnutrition. We watch for the distorting effects of race prejudice, both on the eye of the observing community and on the behavior of those against whom prejudice is directed. It was the opinion of our com-

mittee that in addition to these factors, there are certain "typical" behaviour patterns commonly disapproved of in the white community, which derive fairly directly from the tradition and the social heritage of the Indian. When we think back to the mode of life in Western Canada before the coming of the white man, we realize that it involved living in fairly small, closely-knit social groups, moving about from place to place in pursuit of game. Periods of intense exertion alternated with periods of inactivity—a buffalo hunt (an activity, incidentally, which involved a high degree of skill and social organization) would be followed by relaxation and enjoyment of the fruits of the hunt. It is not difficult to see resemblances between this mode of life and that still followed by many Metis. Hunting, trapping, and fishing are still the main source of livelihood for many, and involve moving about from place to place. Others take seasonal laboring jobs, which still involve moving about. In fact, the moving seems to be enjoyed for its own sake, and even when a livelihood does not appear involved, entire families among the Metis, as among the Indian group, will pay extended visits to other families.

It is not difficult to trace how these deviations tend to perpetuate themselves. The restlessness of many Metis makes employers, naturally enough, reluctant to hire them, or willing to hire them only for casual, low-paid laboring jobs, usually of short duration. The education of the children is interfered with by this nomadic mode of life so that the children commonly do not become qualified for anything other than the unskilled laboring jobs. Dependence on such jobs makes the Metis a particularly vulnerable group when natural catastrophe such as the failure of a fur or fish crop, or general unemployment strikes. Diseases which flourish in poverty and ignorance, such as tuberculosis and the skin diseases, in turn tie their victims more closely to the conditions which gave rise to them.

Violent antipathy to the Metis group is frequently found among the non-Metis living in mixed districts. These people point out, and with some justice, that they must bear almost the whole burden of taxation for themselves and for the Metis, who are frequently "squatters" and pay no local taxes. Hospitalization, education, and social assistance costs for the commonly large families of the Metis may be a very severe burden on certain municipalities. As long as a large portion of the costs of such services must be borne on a local level, we cannot be surprised to find a strong tendency on the part of many municipal authorities to initiate nothing helpful to Metis families in their district, but merely to hope that they will move on and acquire legal residence in some other district.

WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS OF JUDGMENT?

In considering the situation of the Metis who follow a mode of life deriving in many particulars from the Indian tradition, it is important that we, as members of the white community, keep in mind our own inescapable tendency to judge by the standards familiar to us. It is important to remember that different cultural patterns and standards can co-exist within the borders of a nation and that one type is not necessarily either superior or inferior to another. The cultural pattern of the dominant white community stresses the value of material possessions, and the status of a family is frequently determined in large measure by the symbols of wealth which they can display. The cultural pattern of the Metis stresses the value of personal enjoyment on a day by day basis, and material possessions are valued as they add to that enjoyment, to be discarded as they become a burden. Daily work for the majority of the white community, particularly the urban community, has since the industrial revolution become increasingly routinized and monotonous. This tendency the Metis has resisted. He chooses wherever possible outdoor work; he likes to vary his work; and to alternate periods of work with periods of leisure. The mounting toll of emotional strain and mental illness to which our form of living has given rise, should at least give us pause to question whether the Metis may not have greater wisdom in his choice. The Metis way of living emphasizes, too, the friendly virtues; readiness to share both good and ill fortune, care and concern towards old people

and children, tolerance of others' falls from grace, were commented upon as typical by those of our group or of our consultants who had worked extensively with Metis people.

It should be emphasized that the above comments on the difference between the white and the Metis patterns refer to cultural, not biological inheritance. There are many persons of mixed racial descent who have conformed to the approved pattern of the dominant white culture. They are thrifty, sober, clean and careful. Their acceptance of the white community's standard seems almost invariably to include, however, acceptance of the white community's low regard for the Indian inheritance, and a consequent desire to dissociate themselves from it. Thus they are usually quickly absorbed into the rest of the population and no longer regarded as Metis. (See Appendix C). Some of us have known this to happen within a single generation. That it is a continuing process is confirmed by any study of the movement and settlement of population in Western Canada, particularly Manitoba. Such a study will clearly indicate that the degree to which the Indian strain is distributed throughout the general population is far greater than commonly realized.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In any attempt to understand the Metis people as they are today, some knowledge of their origin and history, and of the part they played in the development of the Canadian West, is essential.

The majority of Metis today are the result of French and Indian inter-marriage with a good-sized minority of Scotch and Indian ancestry. There are, of course, small groups resulting from marriage between Indian and other European groups in various places in the West. The two large groups, the French Metis and the Scotch Metis, originated in the early days of the West when almost all economic enterprise centered around the fur trade, and were the result of marriage of Indian women with the French fur-traders of the Northwest Company and the Scottish traders of the Hudson's Bay Company.

It is essential to realize the basic importance of women's work in connection with the fur trade and its significance in the growth of the Metis people. The making of tepees and moccasins, the preparation of pemmican, all things essential to the trapper, was women's work. These skills possessed by the Indian women were economically indispensable to the trapper whether Indian or white; without them the furs could not be secured.

Thus, in marrying an Indian woman the trapper or trader secured a valuable business partner as well as a wife. In the majority of instances the unions which gave rise to the Metis people were not casual but were stable, regular unions.

In the matter of inter-marriage between Indians and whites the policies of the Hudson's Bay Company and of the North-West Company differed. The Hudson's Bay Company imposed a strict segregation at its posts which were located at tide-water. The Indians trapped in the interior and presented their furs at the post. The North-West Company, employing French Canadians very largely, dispersed its employees throughout the country in their search for furs. They lived with the Indians and often married Indian women. The North-West Company used local labour; the Hudson's Bay Company imported theirs for the most part from Scotland. There were, of course, occasional unions between employees of Hudson's Bay posts and Indians, and after 1780, when competition with the North-West Company forced the Hudson's Bay Company to send men inland, these unions were more frequent.

There was a difference, however, in the fate of the children of these mixed unions. In the case of French-Indian marriages the movement was towards the Indian way of life. The North-West Company had plenty of French-Canadian labour and there were few places with the Company for Metis children. It was different with the smaller Scottish Metis group. It was often cheaper for the Hudson's Bay Company to employ the son of a Scottish father and an Indian mother who was on the spot, than to import another man

from overseas. Some were thus employed, and some sons of officers of the Company were often sufficiently educated by their fathers to accept such posts. The daughters of such marriages were in demand for marriage by other post officials. Thus the trend was towards absorption into the white group.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century the Metis became conscious of themselves as a "nation"—as a group distinct from the other settlers in the West and with a different heritage. This feeling of nationhood on the part of the Metis was deliberately fostered by the North West Company who hoped by encouraging the idea that through their Indian mothers the Metis were the masters of the West, and the owners of the soil, to be able to stimulate the Metis to resist the foundation of the Red River Settlement, with its threat to the fur trade.

In those days the Metis were a bold, sturdy people, well adapted to the economy of the country and proud of their forefathers, both white and Indian. Had the Metis been able to maintain the strong leadership which they had at the time of the Riel Rebellion, they might have continued to play a more prominent part in Canadian history. But the failure of the rebellion, the growth of an agricultural economy which was inimical to the old way of life, and the necessity of competing with growing numbers of settlers from the East—all these factors discouraged the continuing unity of the Metis as a nation and the maintenance of leadership. Though the Metis were granted definite parcels of land at the time of annexation, many of them gave up their holdings and moved farther West. This drift away from areas of growing population to the fringes of settlement, where the old way of life still held, has become a recognizable pattern of Metis behaviour.

Many of the Scottish Metis were assimilated into Scotch settlements in Manitoba, especially around Winnipeg, and some found clerical posts, as they had previously, in the Hudson's Bay Company. The French Metis, on the other hand, tended to regard themselves as a distinct group, and it was among them that the idea of the Metis' "nation" lived longest.

The contribution which the Metis have made to the development of the Canadian West is commonly underestimated. Father d'Eschambault, who is working on a study of the Metis for the Manitoba Historical Society, contrasts the number of Indian wars and massacres which plagued the growth of the American West, with the relatively peaceful agricultural development of our own prairies. He ascribes this peace to the role which the Metis played as intermediaries between the two races from which they were themselves descended. In thinking, too, of the accomplishments of individuals among the Metis, it should be remembered that the first Premier of Manitoba, John Norquay, was a Metis.

Reviewing the somewhat scanty information which we possess, about the numbers of Metis present in the early days of Western settlement, we cannot but be impressed by their size in relation to the remainder of the population. The official census of 1871 gives a total population of 11,400 for the Red River Settlement. Of this number only 1,600 were white settlers. The remainder were 5,720 French-speaking Metis; and 4,080 English-speaking Metis. In other words, only one person in seven was not of some mixed origin. G. F. G. Stanley, in his book "The Birth of Western Canada," was of the opinion that if there had been no further immigration for the space of a generation, mixed descent would have been universal. In spite of the fact that there was further immigration from the East, these figures cannot but mean that the number of people of mixed descent in the population of the Western Provinces must be very much greater than is usually recognized.

Recognizing, therefore, the historical contribution of the Metis people in the development of Western Canada, and respecting their right, if they so desire, to follow a mode of life which differs in many respects from that of other sections of the community, our group agreed that we could not consider that the Metis have been accorded treatment equal to that of other citizens unless there has been some recognition of these differences, and willingness to adapt our public services in such a way as to be most meaningful and useful to this section of our population.

WHAT ATTEMPTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO HELP?

Our group was interested in studying what attempts have been made to achieve this end. Since it is only in the three prairie provinces that the Metis form any considerable portion of the population numerically, it is understandable that only in these three provinces did we find material for our study.

ALBERTA—In Alberta we found that efforts to help the Metis have followed somewhat the method adopted by the Dominion Government with respect to the Indians in setting aside special reserve lands.

Under the Metis Population Betterment Act, assented to in 1938, one and one-third million acres of Provincial lands, located in seven different localities throughout the northern part of the province, have been set aside for the exclusive use of the Metis population of the province. Settlement on all colonies is under direct supervision of the Department of Public Welfare. Community projects such as lumbering and fishing are carried on, all profit from these enterprises being deposited in the Metis Trust Fund and these funds are available for use in supplying the settlers with health and educational services, and the like. The Department considers its main objective to be the improvement of living conditions, health, and education of the children.

The building and maintenance of the schools and also the employing of the teachers is the responsibility of the Department of Welfare. On all the colonies one and two-roomed modern schools have been built and fully equipped. There is an effort made to engage teachers who have an inclination to carry on community and social welfare work. Scholarships are provided from the Metis Trust Fund to pupils who will become teachers for the areas. According to the last annual report of the Department, the average attendance in these schools compared favorably with attendance in schools in pioneer white settlements, and progress made by the Metis children was reported as very satisfactory.

The Department's last annual report shows a total of 303 families, comprising 1,295 persons in the areas. There seems to be an emphasis on agricultural enterprise and there are also commercial fishing projects.

Our information on what is being done in Alberta was obtained entirely from Government Legislation and reports.

SASKATCHEWAN—In Saskatchewan the Metis Rehabilitation is considered to be one of the special responsibilities of the Social Aid Branch in the Department of Welfare.

Since 1945, the Department has operated a farm at Lebret, which had been operated previously by the Oblate Fathers, under an agreement between the Oblate Fathers and the province, as a project for the employment of Metis people and as a farm training plan for the children of Metis families. This project is limited in scope, employing about six families, and our group felt we did not have sufficient information to assess its effectiveness. Also in 1945, a survey was undertaken through the Department to assess conditions and needs in certain predominantly Metis areas of the province. It was found that a number of Metis children were entirely without access to schools, and since 1945 new schools have been built in some of these districts. The schools were built through the Department of Social Welfare, employing local Metis labour, but are operated by the Department of Education. A conscious effort is being made to use these schools as community centres. Film showings, night classes in basic English, and group activities such as Guides and Scouts have been started.

We understand, too, that definite efforts are being made in Saskatchewan to help the Metis through stabilizing employment and income in the areas in which they live. The government is exploring the possibilities of new industries in some of these regions. Again, we have incomplete information, and some of the projects are very new, or are still in the planning stage. However, we know that in the Green Lake Settlement, for instance, employment has been provided by a government saw-mill. We understand also that in Sask-

atchewan the government has undertaken fur rehabilitation projects similar to what is being done in Manitoba.

MANITOBA—In our own Province of Manitoba, by far the most significant work seems to be that which has been done through the Game and Fisheries Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, in rehabilitation of fur-bearing areas, upon which many of the Metis depend for their livelihood, and in efforts to ensure as far as possible a continuing supply of furs from these areas and a stable income from them.

The most dramatic example of the possibilities of such rehabilitation is the Summerberry project, undertaken by the Provincial Government in 1936. Marshes in the delta of the Saskatchewan river had dried up, and the muskrat crop had declined seriously. The project was undertaken partly for its long-term aspects, in restoring productivity, and partly as a special "depression measure," local men being used as much as possible in the work. It involved construction of dikes and canals, in order to control the water flow in the area in such a way as to improve the natural conditions for production of muskrat. At the same time, trapping in the area was halted for a period in order to give the muskrat a chance to multiply. The results were startling. It was estimated that there were less than 5,000 muskrats on the entire area when construction started in the early summer of 1936. By the fall of 1938 a careful census showed 12,197 muskrat houses in the area, which were estimated to contain approximately 72,000 muskrats. By 1939 the census showed over 32,000 houses, or an estimated muskrat population of about 200,000. It was decided that the first crop would be taken off in the spring of 1940.

Following the actual physical rehabilitation of the fur bearing area itself, a careful system of controls has been instituted, varying year to year according to conditions, to see that an adequate reserve of breeding stock is always protected, and production, therefore, kept at a high level. In addition, the Provincial Government has entered very actively into arranging marketing of the pelts and distribution of the income from their sale. Each year an estimate is made of the number of muskrats which can be taken off the area without depleting the reserve, and from this it is decided how many trappers should be permitted to trap on the area, and what individual yield will be permitted. Trappers resident in the area immediately around Summerberry are given the first right to trap on the area, and in years where it is possible, this right is extended to residents of nearby trapping areas. Under agreement with the Dominion Government Department of Indian Affairs, a third of the trappers each year are Indians; most of the remainder are Metis.

Trappers are organized in groups of five to ten under a head trapper, who is responsible for seeing that the regulations are kept, and who is permitted a somewhat larger quota in return for these extra duties. There is supervision by personnel of the Fur and Fisheries Branch as to the method of drying and stretching pelts, etc. All the pelts must be marketed through the Province. The Province deducts costs of transportation and selling, makes substantial deductions for royalties and the like, which accrue to the Department itself, and distributes the remainder to the trappers. Since 1941 there has also been an additional deduction to be put in a special crop insurance fund, to be used in years of crop failure. The trapper's share of the production is not paid in a lump sum; at the beginning of the season it is usually necessary for most of the trappers to get an advance on their expected returns to pay for their equipment; after this has been repaid, the remainder is distributed to the trapper in twelve equal monthly instalments. The average return to each man, after payment of the equipment and transportation costs, is around three hundred dollars. This is the return from a trapping season of about a month's duration. Over the year it thus represents a small but steady income of twenty-five dollars monthly to the trapper. Representatives of the Department state that the monthly method of disbursement was adopted because it was believed that the money would be of greater benefit to the trapper and his family if received in this way than if paid in a lump sum. They also state that on the whole the method has been popular with the

trappers themselves and with others in their communities. The Summerberry project is the largest of several undertaken by the Department.

A second major type of project, which seems to have great value, is the Registered Traplines system, begun in 1940. This is a system whereby an individual or a group acquires exclusive right to trap in a certain defined and registered area. It is obvious that such a system gives a strong incentive to trap wisely and preserve breeding stock of the various fur-bearing animals. In the opinion of the Department, it has had a marked effect in controlling heedless and destructive trapping. To quote the Deputy Minister of Mines and Resources—"With a new and increasing stake in the district, the registered trappers have become game guardians and fire rangers, who are putting their unparalleled knowledge and experience to work in placing the wild fur industry upon a sound basis of sustained yield." Among the Metis to date it has been the commoner practice to arrange registration of traplines on a community rather than on an individual basis.

Our group were of the opinion that the work done through the Game and Fisheries Branch has great strengths as a means of improving living conditions in Metis settlements. First, its approach is a basic one. It is designed to increase and to stabilize employment and income. Moreover, it helps ensure employment in an occupation to which the Metis are naturally adapted, and which they like. In this respect we believe it compares favorably with some agricultural projects which have been attempted. Many of the Metis show no interest in agriculture or aptitude for it (a fact which our group was interested in relating to the comment of one of our consultants to the effect that in the Indian and Metis tradition, cultivation of the land, to the extent that it was done at all, was considered to be "women's work"). Finally, such projects as the Summerberry ranch are economically far more than self-supporting. The Province actually recovered its total original investment on the Summerberry project within less than five years, and it remains a continuing source of income.

Apart from this work of the Game and Fisheries Branch, the most significant development we have seen in Manitoba seems to be the reciprocal agreement reached in December, 1947, between the Provincial Department of Health and Public Welfare and the Federal Department of Indian Affairs, regarding health services in areas adjacent to Indian reserves. Health facilities of any sort are none too plentiful in the sparsely settled areas where there is a high proportion of Metis population (see appendix Sections A and D). When there was strict segregation of treatment—Treaty Indians only being treated in the hospitals of the Indian Affairs Branch, and the non-treaty population only being treated through Provincial facilities—the total effectiveness of available services was obviously greatly hampered.

Since December, 1947, the Metis and white population near Indian hospitals and sanatoria can, within certain limitations, receive treatment there. Similarly they can receive preventive services, where available, on the same basis as can the Indians. Indians on reserves which adjoin Provincial Health Units can make use of these facilities on the same basis as can non-treaty persons. Likewise, drugs necessary for the treatment of tuberculosis and venereal diseases are supplied by the Province for treatment of Indians as for others in the population.

This reciprocal arrangement seems a very sensible step, and exemplifies a principle which we would like to see developed in other fields such as that of education. In fact we understand that preliminary experiments are being made with regard to agreements in education where the same sort of situation exists. Facilities both for the Indians and for the Metis and white population are unsatisfactory, and yet there is inefficient use of total facilities available. We realize that there are difficulties in this, and that prejudice exists between Indian and Metis in predominantly Indian districts, just as it does elsewhere between white and Metis. However, we are strongly inclined to the opinion that the existence of sharply distinct services to the two groups is one of the strongest factors in producing and maintaining such prejudices and jealousies.

WHAT PRINCIPLES SHOULD GOVERN POLICIES?

In any evaluation of possible approaches to the problems of the Metis, it seemed to the group that certain principles are important.

First, we believe that there should be recognition of the special contribution which the Metis has made and has still to make in the development of Western Canada, and recognition of his right, if he so desires, to a different way of life from that of the usual urban or agricultural white community. This implies willingness to modify the health, educational and welfare services which should be equally available to all citizens, in such a way that he will be able to obtain the maximum use and benefit from them.

On the other hand, we believe that there should be recognition also of the right of the Metis, if he so desires, to be assimilated into the white community. This implies specifically, we think, the choice of projects which treat the Metis as a citizen inhabiting a certain area, and living under special conditions, rather than as a person of particular racial descent. It would be a serious violation of this basic principle if any project required the specific establishment of mixed descent or formal registration as a Metis.

The wider implications of this right of acceptance and assimilation cannot of course be discussed adequately within the limits of a report such as this. We would like to comment, however, that it seems to us that the wider the difference in status between two groups, the more difficulties will attend assimilation, and the greater are the potentialities for suffering and conflict in individuals torn between the two groups.

In this, the problem of the Metis is the same as that of the Indian, and anything which furthers the dignity and status of the Indian, in his own eyes and in that of the white community, helps the Metis also. Our group therefore welcomed signs of emerging leadership within the Indian community itself, which we believe have been evident within the last few years. We believe that this leadership may, in turn, be stimulating the Department of Indian Affairs to a broader conception of its task. When the Indian steps out of his position as ward of the Government and takes his place as a full citizen of his country, it will be a day of achievement for the Metis too.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the Province of Manitoba—We believe that Manitoba should give formal recognition to the need for special planning on a provincial level to help the Metis. Manitoba is the only one of the three prairie provinces which to date has not done so, and; as nearly as can be judged from what unsatisfactory statistics are available, Manitoba is the province having the largest proportion of Metis in its population.

In the light of the general principles outlined above, we suggest that the best approach in Manitoba would be the establishment of an inter-departmental board or committee whose duties should be to study the special problems of the Metis and to suggest modifications in the administration of the various provincial services so as best to meet their particular needs. At least one full-time official would, we suggest, be required to co-ordinate and give direction to the activities of such a board.

The Government departments mainly concerned would be those of Health and Welfare, Education, Agriculture and Mines and Resources. In all of these departments planned adaptation of existing services could greatly increase their effectiveness for the Metis population.

Department of Health and Public Welfare—In the field of Public Health a valuable beginning has been made in the reciprocal agreement with the Department of Indian Affairs. There is urgent need, which we know the Provincial Government recognizes, for further extension of health facilities in many predominantly Metis areas. We believe that further discussions with the Dominion Government might indicate ways in which co-operative effort could still further improve services. For instance, it might be possible for Manitoba to be divided into two administrative areas, with the Dominion Government taking responsibility for health services to both Indians and

non-Indian population in its area, and the Provincial Government taking similar responsibility in other areas. We believe also that such facilities as do exist now would be more widely used by the Metis if accompanied by an imaginative interpretation of the value and use of these services to each Metis family.

In the field of welfare, the Public Welfare Division has a good deal of experience and concern with problems of Metis families as shown both in applications for public assistance and in help required with other social problems, particularly in unorganized territory. This experience should be analyzed, and the findings organized and co-ordinated with the experience of other departments, in order that planning of a broader scope than is possible within the bounds of a single department, and mainly preventive in nature, may be possible.

Department of Agriculture—It is suggested that this department might find ways of improving economic conditions among Metis and other inhabitants of the less settled areas by exploring the agricultural possibilities of these areas; for instance, improved methods of harvesting and a more extensive and organized means of marketing crops natural to these areas, such as seneca root, the seeds of special grasses such as timothy and clover, and wild rice.

Department of Education—In Education there is urgent necessity for some thoughtful joint planning between Provincial and Dominion Departments regarding sections of the province which are predominantly of Indian and Metis population; and there is equally urgent necessity for the Provincial Department to make an honest appraisal of its own facilities in these areas. We believe that such an appraisal would recognize that Metis children in many sections of the province receive extremely scant schooling in terms of total days attendance; that the content of their instruction is planned primarily for children of urban and organized rural communities, and taught without adaptation and often, without enthusiasm by inadequately trained, underpaid and discouraged teachers. We suggest that the nomadic, outdoor character of rural Metis life could be given recognition in a school term reduced in length but increased in effectiveness. It seems to us that the emphasis should be placed on the "three R's"—health, citizenship, and certain practical arts. Undoubtedly, making such a program effective requires adaptability, ingenuity, and enthusiasm from a teacher, and therefore would imply, we think, offering special inducements such as increased salaries and a reduced working year to attract teachers able to do the job.

Through co-operative working between the Departments of Education and Health and Welfare, under the stimulus of a committee as suggested above, the rural schools in these areas could be made social centres, and centres of adult as well as juvenile education.

Department of Mines and Resources—The work being done through the Game and Fisheries Branch of this department has already been discussed in some detail. Our group is enthusiastic about the value of this work.

In our opinion, however, the implications of the project in terms of human welfare go beyond the natural responsibility of the Department of Mines and Resources and properly call for the participation of other government departments if the full potentialities of the project are to be realized. This project points to the value of inter-departmental planning by a committee such as we have just suggested.

We would like to suggest exploration of the possibilities of helping Metis and other low income groups through similar projects in reforestation, fishing and fish marketing.

In addition to guiding adaptation of services to the Metis directly and exploration of new services, a Board or Committee such as we have outlined could well initiate an educational campaign designed to acquaint both the Metis themselves and the general population with the history and the contribution of the Metis to Western Canada. We would like to see such instruction given in the schools together with consideration of the contribu-

tion of other ethnic groups, and to see it extended to the adult population by such means as film, radio, pamphlets, etc. We found an example of the kind of thing we believe desirable in a pamphlet now in use in the schools of the province, "Ways of Living in Manitoba," which contains an excellent section describing the Metis.

Provincial revenues from the natural resources which the Metis help to harvest would, we suggest, provide a logical source from which some of the increased cost of improved services could be met.

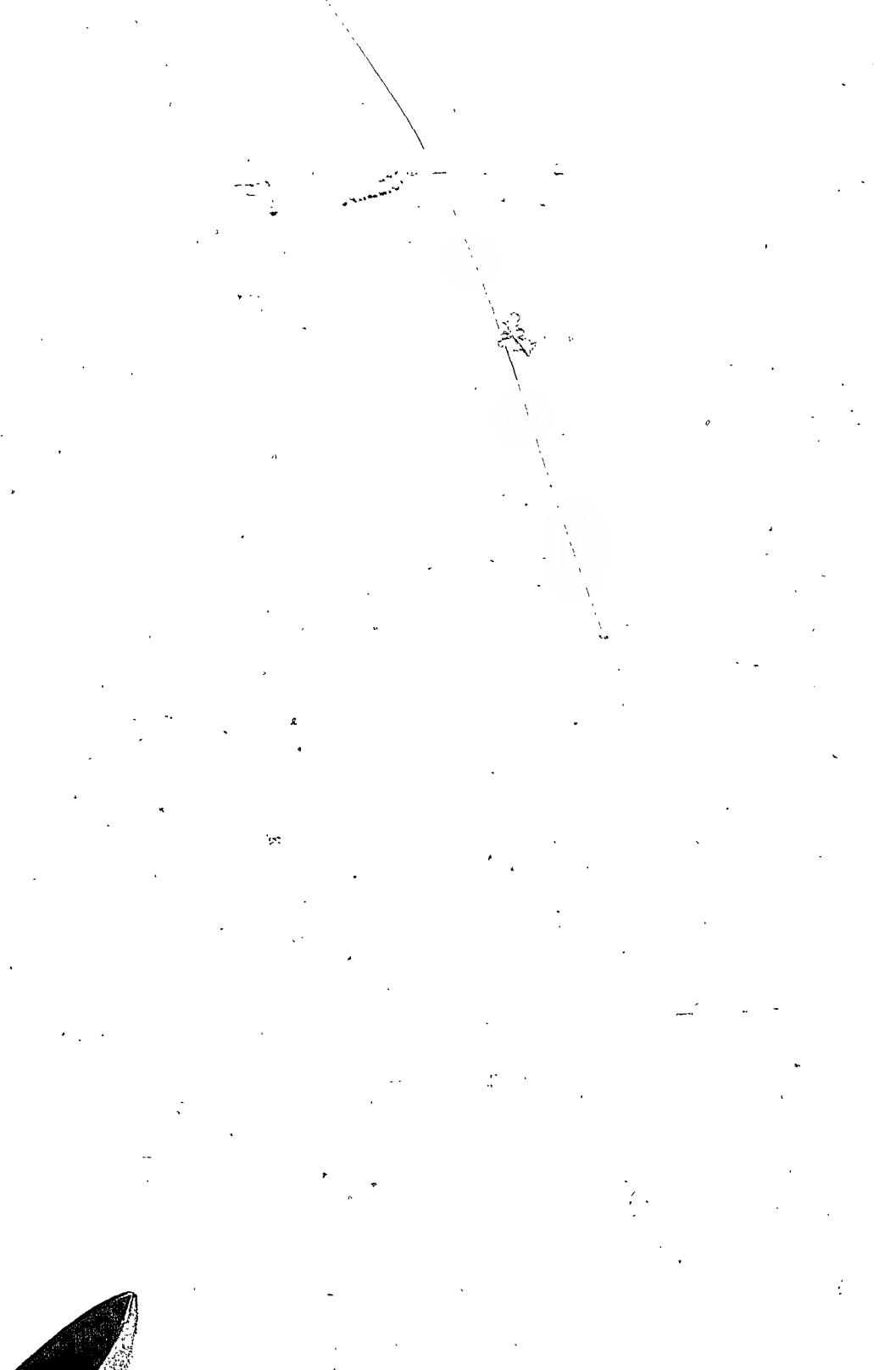
To the Greater Winnipeg Community—The metropolitan area of Greater Winnipeg has both absolutely and proportionately the largest Metis population of any Canadian urban area and is, therefore, a logical centre to pioneer in service to the Metis. In St. Vital, Fort Garry, and St. Norbert are numbers of Metis families, some of whom have lived in the district for generations. Being, in the main, solid citizens of moderate means, they attract little attention and their Metis inheritance little comment. In the downtown section around Point Douglas, where so many of the social problems of Winnipeg are concentrated, is a quota of Metis people which tends to attract more notice. For the most part this is a "floating population" with a small core of fairly permanent inhabitants. They share in general the same social disabilities and problems as the non-Metis people living in the same district.

In Fort Rouge, edging into Fort Garry, is a small settlement of Metis people who receive a great deal of attention from Public Health Nurses, truant officers and social workers (see Appendix "F"). Workers familiar with the district say that if anything is to be accomplished in this community beyond the alleviation of individual difficulties, the approach should be a community one. Workers who know the Metis feel that such an approach would draw on one of the strengths of the Metis, his feeling of group solidarity. The fact that there are no community recreational facilities available to the group suggests an obvious starting point. Any project to have permanence, requires participation in planning, and eventually, leadership from the Metis themselves.

To Social Workers—Members of our group believe that our study has indicated ways in which, as individual social workers, we can improve our ability to help Metis people. Briefly, we may summarize these as:

Careful examination of our own attitudes regarding the value and dignity of the Indian tradition; increased awareness of the significance of cultural factors; clearer thinking as to the difference between cultural and biological inheritance in order to improve our ability to help prospective adopting or foster parents accept the child of partly Indian descent, recognizing not only the need of the child, but also the fact that the potentialities he brings to the childless home do not differ in any important respect from those of other children in the community.

It is the hope of the group that this study may point the need for further research and may stimulate action along some of the lines indicated.



Appendix

Because of the dearth of specific material of any sort regarding the Metis, we are attaching hereto brief descriptions of Metis families and districts and of certain aspects of Metis problems, gathered from different sources in both rural and urban social agencies in Manitoba. It is subjective material and is selective, inasmuch as it describes those Metis whose problems have brought them into contact with social agencies.

A—Home Life Among the Metis in a Northern Area

TYPE OF HOUSE—

The homes are usually built by the Metis themselves at a place where they think their normal food supply of fish and game is available, and fuel and water is within easy reach. They start out with a one-room shack and add to it when the family has increased enough to warrant more space. These shacks vary in size, but generally they are around 16 x 18 feet, built of logs, plastered with mud inside and outside and then whitewashed. The roofs are sometimes just thatched, occasionally they are shingled; but the average Metis home has a roof of boards covered with roofing paper, with a hole for the stove pipe. The windows are small, usually two to a room, in opposite walls. These windows are removed entirely in the summertime, but in winter they are padded with mud and rags to make them as air-tight as possible. The poorer Metis family does not use mosquito netting in the summer and has to cope with innumerable flies and mosquitoes.

The homes are equipped with only the bare necessities—heater or stove, beds, table and benches, with possibly one or two chairs. The furniture is homemade or some relic inherited from a family of better means. The beds occupy the most space in the home, as many people live together in the one room—often two families. Relatives frequently move in when they have no food in their own home.

Bedding is always at a minimum, consisting of two flannelette sheets, one or two blankets, or more often quilts made of old clothing. Occasionally a home is visited where the floors are scrubbed clean, with one or two hand-made rag rugs on them, but more frequently there is just a bare wood floor which is not washed from one year's end to the other. Dishes are also at a minimum and consist of cups, bowls, tin spoons, knives and forks—the latter are seldom used. The homes have a large iron kettle used for soup and a frying pan, and usually a granite tea kettle and a tin teapot. Candles or coal oil lamps provide light at night.

There are no plumbing facilities and some Metis homes do not even have an outdoor privy. Water is hauled from the lake in the summer and ice in the winter. The ice is chopped and thawed as required. Taking a bath under these conditions is a major operation, especially in winter time. In the summer the average Metis housewife makes an effort to keep her children clean, and washes frequently.

Housekeeping is reduced to essentials. There is very little cooking done, as the fare of the Metis consists of fish, soup, wild meat and bannock. Those who have an oven in the home bake bread all the year round. The least fortunate, who have a Dutch oven built outside, are not able to bake their bread in the winter.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN THE COMMUNITY—

In these areas the trading posts are operated by white people who seem to have an economic control over the community. The Metis people are quite dependent on these trading posts for the price which they get for their products. It is questionable whether they always receive full value.

Employment is chiefly fishing and trapping, and even that is limited, as the average man seems only interested in obtaining enough to eat. The average Metis men do not appear to work with a view to earning money to bank, buy furniture or improve the home. They seem to live for today, and if they have a few dollars to spare, they are likely to go to the nearest town to drink beer and buy little nonsenses that are pretty but of no utility.

EDUCATION—

Almost every Metis community has a school, which is usually a one-room building, often far too small to accommodate the children living in the district. This means that children of school age sometimes have to be excluded because of lack of space. Seldom do the Metis children go beyond Grade four as they do not start school as early as town children and have more frequent absences. Consequently, by the time they reach Grade four they are around fourteen years of age and have no further desire to attend school.

HEALTH—

Due to low standard of living, lack of nutrition and lack of facilities, health conditions are very poor. In many of these communities there is a great deal of T.B. and only a regular examination of every resident could improve the situation. As an example of the lack of health facilities, in one community the only health facility is the public health nurse at a centre 25 miles away, but during the rainy season it is practically impossible to get there by road. In an emergency the sick person could be transported by boat, about an eight-hour trip, then, if there was a car available at the landing, could be driven another ten miles.

A T.B. clinic is held periodically at the centre, but due to the lack of transportation and funds, very few of the Metis people are able to take advantage of it. During the past two years many of the people have been brought into the clinic, but it has been impossible up to the present time to have a large scale check-up of the T.B. suspects. The Indians on the nearby reserve are visited every three months by a doctor.

NOMADIC TENDENCIES—

After the spring "ratting" is over many Metis families start travelling around the country. They pack their grub and tent in their wagon, go visiting relatives here and there, working the odd day on a farm and spending a week or so on the outskirts of a town so that they can attend the public picnics. They camp together at different towns and by the time they have all pitched their tents there may be a little tent town. On these occasions they build a fire outside, over which is suspended a big cauldron of soup. This soup is always available for anyone who is hungry. Later in the summer whole families turn out to dig seneca root. During the past few years seneca root has been averaging a good price and many Metis have made substantial sum of money at this work. However, this money is often spent on frivolities. In the fall they drift back home for their haying operations, as nearly all Metis families own a horse and wagon and need hay for winter. At this time they also prepare their homes for winter, patching the chinks in the mud, putting a fresh coat of whitewash and banking their houses to make them warmer. Some of the more thrifty Metis men spend some part of the summer mending their fishing nets ready for winter use.

RECREATION—

There is no recreation other than that which they make for themselves. They are fond of dancing, singing and telling stories. In the wintertime they often go from house to house, night after night, drinking homebrew, dancing and singing. In the summer their recreation is just going from place to place in their wagons, visiting and picnicking.

SIZE OF FAMILY—

Those who are able to have children have them often and close together. Families of six to eight children are common. I know one family with

twenty-one children. Even in the families where there are many children many others have died from tuberculosis, neglect, ignorance or the poor physical condition of the mother.

FAMILY SOLIDARITY—

Family ties among the Metis seem strong, especially between the women members of the family. They will share their food with their neighbors or their relatives until there is nothing left to eat in the house. As a general rule, families get along very well together and the women really care for their children as well as they know how. The men also seem genuinely fond of their children and are affectionate towards them.

ATTITUDES TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS—

Illegitimacy is more or less accepted among the Metis, at least it is very prevalent. When another child comes into the family, the concern is not over the fact that the child is illegitimate but that it means another mouth to feed. The Metis are always willing to take someone else's child into their home if the parents die. Aged couples often have four or five small children in the home who belong to their wayward daughters.

As a general rule, when a Metis couple are living together they are faithful to each other and do not indulge in extra-marital relations. The man is master in his own home and the woman follows him in true squaw fashion. However, if for some reason they part, it does not take them long to set up domestic relations with someone else. In a sense they are social people and do not like living alone.—M.B.

B—A Metis Family in a Central Manitoba Rural Area

The family we describe is composed of seventeen members, ranging in age from a few weeks to sixty years. The basis of the family is a common-law union, to which was born twelve children. Three more children have been added, as illegitimate children were born to two daughters. Two members of the family have died of T.B., one of a heart condition, a fourth member is deformed as a result of illness, and still another suffers from epileptic seizures.

None of the members of this family is steadily employed. One has left home and contributes to some extent, but there is no steady income at any time. The girls are not trained for housework or other employment and about the only thing the men excel at is wood-cutting. They appear quite content to live from day to day and earn only enough to buy food.

A complete lack of interest in, or understanding of education is shown. The family moves about so often that there is no opportunity for the younger members to establish themselves in any one school. The parents see no advantages to be gained by education, except possibly that they may learn to speak English. Of the seventeen members, the highest grade obtained is that of grade four.—B.J.

C—A Metis Family Known to a City Social Worker

The "A" seniors were among the first inhabitants of the Winnipeg suburb where they lived. They lived in a large frame house, which they owned. Housekeeping standards were adequate and the children given the opportunities of normal home life. Mr. A. is still living. Although over 80, he is very active and earns sufficient to pay his taxes and to keep himself. He is intelligent and observant for his years, speaks excellent French and understands but does not speak English. He is well dressed and neat in appearance, well respected in the community and usually referred to as French-Canadian. He has three daughters, all of whom are married and have children.

Marion and her family live in a small house on her father's property. The house is attractively painted and well kept, interior clean and well furnished. The husband has a steady job in the city, as have her two eldest sons. There are six children, four of whom are of school age. They are

healthy, well dressed youngsters and attend both church and school regularly. They are accepted members of the community and generally believed to be French-Canadian.

Jennie is fat and slovenly in appearance and is mentally defective. As a child she was over-protected. She married very young, her husband also being dull and immature. With her husband she went to live in the Fort Rouge colony. The husband worked spasmodically and drank heavily. Shortly after the birth of their second child he left the city to seek employment and Jennie began a career of promiscuity. She drifted through a series of brief common-law relationships, moving back and forth between the downtown area and the Fort Rouge settlement, living most of the time in single rooms in boarding houses or blocks in the centre of the city. Sometimes she had the children with her under very bad conditions; sometimes they were cared for by the grandparents; sometimes she would go back with her husband for brief periods. She drinks heavily. Jennie is sometimes referred to as "a typical half-breed."

Bernadette worked in her home district as a domestic for a number of years after she left school. At 25 she married a man several years her senior, who worked steadily for the railway. They live in a non-Metis residential suburb and own their own home, which is one of the nicest on the street. The interior is well decorated and furnished, and contains all the modern conveniences: frigidaire, washing machine, telephone, etc. They have three children, two of school age. These children are attractive and well dressed. The school aged ones are of average intelligence, attend school regularly and are doing well. Bernadette speaks both French and English fluently, although she did not have much education. She is intelligent and her appearance is that of the average housewife and mother in the district. The marriage seems stable and happy, and the family is accepted in the community as being French-Canadian.—Y.T.

D—A Metis Community in the Interlake Area

DISTRICT—

This community is located about eighty miles northwest of Winnipeg, in the area between Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg. To reach the nearest village a trip of five to ten miles over bush trails and four miles of poor grade road is necessary. None of these roads is ploughed in winter, and they are generally impassable, except by team.

SOIL—

A large portion of this area is muskeg. It is crossed by gravel ridges. No land is fit for planting field crops, but most of the families prepare some sort of a garden. Numbers of deer and bear live in the gravel ridges and muskrats inhabit the swamps.

FAMILIES—

There are eleven families living in this district, nine of whom are Metis.

Two of the older couples are childless, but in each case the families have accepted nephews and nieces into the home following the death of the mother and they are always prepared to take in some young person. This leaves seven younger families with children ranging in number from five to twelve with an average of eight children for each family.

ECONOMIC FOUNDATION OF THE SETTLEMENT—

These Metis families are dependent on the natural resources for most of their income. They cut large quantities of hay, haul wood and do some trapping during the winter.

SCHOOL FACILITIES—

There is a one-roomed school in poor repair. It is unpainted, dark and not well kept. Near this school is a teacherage, which is also in poor repair and consequently very cold. The teacher is a rather elderly man who has

taught in a number of communities and who has said that this district is one of the most backward areas he has ever encountered. He stated that he doubted if any of the children had ever seen the open water of a lake, and that when discussing the mountains the children stated that they thought they might be as high as a house.

HEALTH FACILITIES—

No health unit serves this area but the public health nurse visits the school about twice a year to give inoculations and physical examinations. Health clinics are held at the nearest village about once a month. The nearest accessible doctor and hospital are forty-five miles away.

RECREATION—

There is practically no recreation in the district. The school always has its Christmas party and occasionally there is a card party and dance. There are, of course, dances held in the surrounding districts which are frequently attended by these families. The nearest village offers a dance about every fortnight and a picture show once a week, weather permitting. It also has a three-table pool hall, but no other recreation.

CHURCH—

The church is inactive. A small Greek Catholic church has been built near the school and a priest visits about once every two or three months to take Mass.

There has been no Protestant minister in the district for a number of years, although in the summer a student minister may hold services for a couple of months.—W.F.M.

E—A Metis Community in South-east Manitoba

Out of a total population of 150 to 175 people in this area, there are 125 (twenty-seven families), who are or have been in receipt of service from the Department of Health and Public Welfare at some time during the past five years. This service consists mainly of financial assistance. Help to unmarried mothers, mothers' allowance, adoptions and requests from other agencies such as family allowance investigations, complete the service provided.

The economic level of the community is low. The men earn their living by working in the bush for one of the lumber companies, or on their own, cutting cordwood. There is also a small amount of roadwork. The soil is very poor, which means that there is very little farming done; in fact very few people take the trouble to plant a garden. One resourceful farmer who moved into the area has cows and chickens and supplies a few of the people with milk and eggs. Otherwise most of the children either drink canned milk or do without milk.

The majority of employment is seasonal. During the winter months bush work is plentiful. In summer the road work is available for some, others make money by picking berries in season.

Large families, ranging from 4-15 children, are the rule. These people live in very poor houses, with a minimum of equipment. They seem to be satisfied and are loath to leave their home area. One or two men may go away to work for a season, but they always return home. There seems to be a strong pull to remain in this area.—M.N.

F—A Group of Eight Metis Families in a Winnipeg Suburban Area

These eight families are a racially homogeneous group who refer to themselves as French, but even to the casual observer are of mixed French and Indian descent. The settlement has existed, according to the inhabitants, since the early twenties. In the early days it was a considerable distance from the outskirts of the city, and was thought of as a quite isolated community from Winnipeg proper. The group have been squatters on city

property, paying no taxes and, in the main, not owning their lots. The city has taken a more or less tolerant attitude towards this up until the last few years. Recently, however, the city, acting partly through its Public Health Department, has been putting pressure on the group to move along. This is because of the fact that the area is now filled with veterans' houses under the Wartime Housing Act. On one street two Metis shacks only remain to form a startling contrast to the bright new wartime houses. Undoubtedly the families will be compelled to move shortly. All of the families expressed concern over this, and some resentment at being forced to move on. The group felt unanimously that city life was not for them. In the city they were compelled to live in tenement houses and their feeling about this was that it imposed too many restrictions on their freedom to come and go when they liked. In the city, too, they felt there was not enough space. We felt that, in the city, perhaps more pressure is put on them to conform to public health standards of housekeeping and living conditions, than when they are relatively isolated. It is true that none of the present dwellings conform to these standards, and they would have been compelled to move, and their houses torn down long ago, were it not for lack of accommodation elsewhere.

BACKGROUND AND ORIGIN OF THE GROUP—

All of the families on both sides (with the exception of one of the wives), came originally from the St. Norbert, St. Anne and St. Pierre districts. These are farming districts southeast of Winnipeg, where there are many relatively wealthy and well established families, who refer to themselves as French, and are accepted as such in the community. It is understood that this settlement is one of long standing, with its beginnings in the last century. There has always been an element amongst them which did not settle down in the ways of the community, but took to a nomadic kind of life and spread to various parts of the province. Apparently the group under consideration is part of this.

Of the eight families, three have been there continuously since the early days, but in addition, the settlement has always served as a kind of stopping off place for itinerant families. In the earlier days the heads of the household worked far and near, moving to the bush camps in winter and the rest of the season obtaining various casual labour jobs in the city. Now all the men have relatively close-to-home jobs in Fort Rouge, but in several cases their wives and families seldom venture into the city, and remain in relative isolation. Two families moved into rooming houses in the city for the winter, returning in the spring.

HOUSING—

All of the families live in the same type of dwelling unit. The impression that this type of house makes is that it was built from any odds and ends of boards that happened to be handy. The result is a very crude and, of course, unpainted shack, with no foundation or cellar, and in one instance no floor. In size there is variation from about 10' by 20' to 15' by 30'. Characteristically, the dwelling has one room, though one had three rooms. Toilet facilities are of the outdoor variety; one woman complained, however, that the Public Health people were after her because she "has no outdoor toilet." There is, of course, no plumbing or electric lighting, light being provided by coal oil lamps, and water obtained from a water man at 50 cents per barrel.

Overcrowding is the most obvious problem and one of the shacks will be described to illustrate this. This is a one-room affair, which houses eight people, the parents and six children. The oldest child is nine years, and the youngest about three weeks. Household furnishings consist of a bed and a cot, a heater stove, a table and two chairs. The bed, in addition to its usual function, serves as a place to store things under, and a place for the children to play on. As the children have little warm clothing, they play inside the house the greater part of the winter. It is not difficult to imagine the problems which living under these conditions creates for the family.

OCCUPATION AND INCOME—

All of the male heads of the families were employed as seasonal laborers, the type of work being very dependent on general economic conditions. In times of a plentiful supply of labor, these people find it very difficult to get work of any kind. All of the families had been on relief at one time or other, and all at the same time during the depression. At the present time all are employed for relatively short periods, with seasonal layoffs; in the winter they work for the Fort Rouge coal companies shovelling coal, in the spring and summer they work for landscape gardeners. This latter type of business is enjoying a comparative boom at the present time, employment being available for the Metis as sodders. This pays at the rate of five cents per yard and a man being able to lay 300 to 500 yards in a day earns from fifteen to twenty-five dollars. In poorer times, the rates drop to 1 cent a yard, and the number of days work in a season drops greatly. This is in general a very unstable type of employment, fluctuating greatly with periods of boom and depression in the building trade.

During the war, when labor was scarce, one member of the group obtained work with the C.N.R., as well as with two war plants, the Cordite Plant at Transcona and McDonald Aircraft. He heartily disliked this latter type of work, because it was carried on indoors, and because of the shift work involved. His feelings seemed to be that he would prefer to work where it was not necessary to keep a rigid routine such as is involved in factory work. All of the men asked about this, expressed a preference for outdoor work, and work where you could "take your own time." The work habits of the men are characteristically unstable.

Five males in these families joined the Army. They reported that they did not like Army routine, and were not particularly happy there. However, they made a distinction between being in the Army in Canada and being in the Army overseas. There seemed to be the suggestion in this that they were welcomed in England as Canadians; with no feeling of discrimination. One man married an Irish girl, who with the baby, has moved into his parents' home.

EDUCATION—

There are two schools in the district, parochial and public. As a rule the Metis children attend the parochial school until the date of their first communion, after which a few drift into the public school. Neither school has adequate facilities to offer a non-academic course to these children. They attend school irregularly and as a result usually leave at the age of 14 or 15, having completed only Grade IV or V. They are ill-equipped to fit into any employment situation with the exception of unskilled labor.

RECREATION—

There are several community centres in operation in this district, as well as a number of church groups. These organizations are all controlled by the white element in the community and the Metis do not participate in any of the activities.

CHURCH—

All of these families are Roman Catholic. The parish priest visits in the homes regularly and offers assistance in time of need. However, these families do not attend church regularly or participate in church activities, probably because the church is attended by a large group of well-to-do white families and the Metis feel inferior.—D.C. and J.C.

G—A Metis Community in Western Manitoba

This Metis community in the western part of the province centers around the combined church and school. The church is situated on a very small reservation from which most of the Indian families have moved. The country is hilly for the most part although the soil is good and there are several farms in the district, mostly operated by white men. The forty-odd Metis families are looked on as "outcasts" by people of the district.

Only two of the Metis families in the community operate farms; standards are much higher in these two homes and the children are encouraged to attend school. Most of the families, however, are merely squatters and frequently go to Saskatchewan during the harvest season or to the Lake Winnipegosis area during the winter for fishing. Couples sometimes go out working together during the harvest season, leaving the children with relatives. For the most part, however, the principal employment is day work by the father, clearing land, "scrubbing," for nearby farmers, hauling wood, trapping, etc. People in the district state that while many are hard workers others show a strong disinclination for labor of any kind, regardless of how desperately the money may be needed. Family allowances constitute the principal source of income in many cases. The only animals kept are dogs and horses—the horses for transportation.

The majority of the families live in crude shacks, which frequently contain neither floors nor windows. Furnishings for the most part are meagre and primitive and it is not uncommon to find as many as twelve people living in a one-room shack.

Up until two years ago there were no school facilities whatever, as the nearest white school would not accept these children. Classes are now held in the church. The present enrolment is 42, the children coming from a radius of five miles. The classroom is much too small for the needs of the community and there are at least 25 other children who receive no schooling whatever. There are several pupils, aged 12-15 years who have just started in Grade One.

Health generally is quite good although the priest states he is "amazed" that there are no more deficiency diseases. Apparently only one of the pupils in the school receives any milk at all, and that because her father recently purchased a cow. The tuberculosis rate is very low, a nurse attached to the nearby Indian reserve arranges for periodic examinations.

While legal marriages are contracted willingly, wife-trading and wife-stealing are still common. In this event, the child of such a union generally remains with the father. There is naturally a high rate of illegitimacy, companionate marriages and other irregular family situations, and despite the efforts of the priest to check these tendencies, the people themselves attach little or no stigma to them.

Generally speaking, the people in this community are quite law abiding although there were several instances of draft evasion during the war. They mix very little with other groups and are suspicious of strangers; although helpful in giving directions, etc., they frequently refuse to give any information concerning their neighbors. Any social problems that arise are usually settled within the community. Although standards are very low compared to other communities in the district, the social agency in the area is very rarely called on to give any child welfare services.—I.S.

H—Illustration of Cultural Conflict as Seen in an Individual

One of the most difficult and delicate tasks is to bring into open discussion with a Metis the real feelings that he has with regard to his own racial origin. These feelings will occasionally come out indirectly, as criticism against a school teacher with some such remark as "She looks on us as Indians," or some disparaging remark about the Indian ways of a member of their group who is straying from the straight and narrow path.

On very rare occasions, however, a sufficiently secure relationship has been established with a worker so that the Metis has been able to discuss his or her feelings fairly freely.

Some accept their position without apparent feeling of inferiority. They are usually those who are secure in their own personal relationships, such as a happily married Metis couple. Some have accepted a position of inferiority, "I know I am a half-breed and I expect to be treated like one," but with no resentment, or with resentment so deeply hidden that it is not apparent. A few resent very strongly their inferior status and want both the freedom

of their own culture and the status of the white community. The following is an example of this conflict.

A girl of mixed French, Scotch and Indian origin was brought up in a typical Metis community, where the moral standards were quite low, and most of the girls had children before marriage. Her appearance showed quite clearly her Indian ancestry. She became pregnant when nineteen to a Treaty Indian, but the child was stillborn. Two years later she was again pregnant, but this time met a soldier of Scotch origin (not Metis) who gave her the respect she had never received from her other boy friends. "He always came to my place and never suggested that I meet him on the street." When he suggested marriage she told him that she was pregnant and that he would be happier with a girl his family would respect. However, he said he would like to give the baby his name and promised to accept it as his own child. They were married shortly before the baby was born and after some happy months together he was sent overseas, and soon afterwards became a prisoner of war. He died later in a prison camp.

Had they remained together, he might have been strong enough to help her overcome her personality difficulties, but after he went away she returned with the child to her own home, and to her old companions. She soon became pregnant again, but lost this child shortly after birth.

She made repeated efforts to break away from her environment but was unsuccessful. The standards that she admired and desired were those of the white community where she knew she was not accepted, and she would return for companionship to a group that she really despised. She was determined, however, that the child would not be brought up in the environment in which she herself had been raised and made unsuccessful attempts to keep the child with her while she worked. Her lack of stability prevented steady employment and she moved from one crisis to another, giving the child a great deal of affection but inadequate care.

While she "played around" within her own cultural group, when it came to marriage she again chose a man of the white community, thus trying for a second time to gain for herself and her child the status that she really desired.—D.L.P.

I—Metis Children in Care of the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg—April, 1948

An analysis of the children in care this date shows that 94 children, i.e., approximately 18% of all children in care, have some Indian ancestry. Forty-three of these children have the characteristics of Indian appearance—dark skin, dark straight black hair, high cheek bones, etc. Sixty-nine of the children are Catholics. All but four are wards of the society.

None of these children have been cared for in Indian or recognizably Metis foster homes. Many of the Catholic children have been brought up in French-Canadian foster homes, where their dark eyes and hair are no different from the foster parents' own family.

There are examples of several older children returning to their Metis relatives and the Metis way of life, but there are no indications of children without family ties taking pride in belonging to the Indian race, as is found, for example, with the Chinese children. Even youngsters of definitely Indian appearance tend to regard themselves as belonging to the white group, if they no longer are in contact with their own families.

Most of the children not of definitely Indian appearance are unaware that they possess Indian ancestors, as are white families with whom they live. Only when adoption is being considered is the Metis background discussed with prospective adopting parents. At the present time adoption has already been arranged, or is in process of being arranged, for five children of Metis background, in homes where they had previously boarded. Even children who are dark eyed and dark skinned are in this community regarded as French-Canadian; and if it were not for the recorded background the facts

regarding the Indian ancestry of many of the children would be lost. Indeed, the society has no doubt that many of the families coming to their attention as French-Canadian are, if the facts were known, of Metis background. In the same way many of the French-Canadians used by the society as foster parents are undoubtedly of mixed racial origin, although they are not recorded as such. The society finds that no family or individual, unless specifically asked if their racial background includes the Indian strain, will mention it when giving nationality.

In looking over the 94 children in care, it is interesting to see how well most of the children have adjusted. They range in age from babies to adolescents. A number of the older children are presenting some difficulties in adjustment, but these difficulties cannot be attributed specifically to the fact of their Indian background. The picture is complicated by personality difficulties, mental retardation and the usual difficulties of adolescents, especially of an adolescent in the care of an agency. The children who adjust well seem wholeheartedly accepted by the foster families and communities with whom they live, no matter whether they are of Indian appearance or not.

No effort has been made to go over the records of children who are no longer in the care of the agency. It does seem as if, in our present set-up, the best hope of satisfactory adjustment for the Metis child without family ties of his own is assimilation into the white community.—J.P.

J—Problems of Child Welfare Agencies in Relation to Metis Families

There would seem to be some special problems which child welfare agencies face in working with Metis families and individuals, and which are related to racial and cultural factors. It is recognized that the way of life of the Metis puts little stress on competition and on accumulation of worldly goods, and that living standards may therefore be considerably lower than those of the nearby white community. Frequently the social worker, in planning for the welfare of children, is faced with the responsibility of deciding whether certain children would profit by being removed from their own homes and given the advantages of better physical care and a more stable environment. In many cases the community presses for such action to be taken in the interests of the children. As we examine the problem more realistically, however, we are often faced with the question, "What have we to offer such children?" The question of placement of Metis children in homes where they will be accepted as part of the family group is not an easy one, and becomes increasingly difficult the older the child. It has been brought out in other sections of this report that a strong family tie is typical with Metis families, and this is often something that we are unable to offer a child in a substitute placement. While we recognize and appreciate the importance of good physical care for children, more and more are we becoming aware of the fact that their emotional needs take priority, and must be met if they are to make good adjustments.

Placement of Metis babies on a permanent basis is also a difficult problem, due to commonly held prejudices against this group. Usually adoption of her child cannot be held out to the Metis unmarried mother as a possible solution to her problem, because of this prejudice. Fortunately a number of these babies are absorbed naturally into the family group, but for the Metis girl who cannot take her baby home or provide for him herself, the alternative is usually guardianship of the child by the child caring agency. For the child it means foster home placement, rather than the more complete acceptance implied in adoption. Sometimes it means institutional instead of foster home placement. Both in Manitoba, and from what we can gather in other western provinces, institutional placements have on the whole been of longer duration for Metis children than for other groups, because of the difficulty of finding satisfactory foster home placements for them.—M.H.

